The Leavenworth Project

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Commemorating Conviction

The Leavenworth Project

Preface

This paper offers supporting information about my subject matter, research, and practice. It is intended to outline the conceptual underpinnings of my thesis work, *The Leavenworth Project*. The project is a multi-layered work investigating the histories of the institutions at Leavenworth, Kansas, and commemorating the political prisoners held there in the early 1900s. The first installment of *The Leavenworth Project* employs text, sculpture, and installation, incorporating performative gestures to engage the prison system, specifically the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. The project is a space to consider the relevant and uniquely American narrative of Leavenworth, situated within broader conversations about modern institutions, free speech, and historic commemoration.

Introduction

The narrative of the various prison systems in our country reveals how our government has used the justice system as a weapon against left political speech and organizing since the Labor movement of the early 20th century. My interest in the subject of prisons stems from my own experience navigating the justice system, which has informed my art practice and research of the prison-industrial complex. Studying the histories of the US Bureau of Prisons, I encountered extraordinary stories of prisoner organizing from the early 20th century through the mid 1970s that I was oblivious to during my years as prisoner within that very system.

One effect of the criminalization of political speech is that the accused, along with their ideas and literature, end up reaching new audiences on prison yards. It is not surprising then that politicization and organization of prison populations has historically gained momentum in step with movements on the outside. Labor movements worldwide during the late 19th and early 20th centuries affected a new level of political consciousness among American prison populations at the time, and it was the Civil Rights movement and the Third World Left which inspired ranks of prisoners during the Radical Prison movement a half-century later. Political awareness, generated through prisoner-led groups and history classes, allowed prisoners to conceptualize their situation in terms of racism and capitalism – the forces behind the inequalities that have made imprisonment a common fate for members of the working class, particularly non-whites.

During my years in the Federal Prison System I never witnessed any political discussion groups or classes. Though I had many conversations with fellow prisoners who,

like me, could perceive the injustice of the justice system, we would not have been able to invoke socioeconomics or political histories to articulate why. I never heard about political education groups where my fellow prisoners thoughtfully discussed history and politics as relevant to our situation. I never saw a single prisoner publication.

Riots and strikes still happen with some frequency in American prisons, but they are irregular and scattered. In 2011 and 2013, there were a series of hunger strikes in west coast prisons in which over 12,000 and 30,000 prisoners, respectively, organized in solidarity to protest unjust and inhumane conditions (Johnson). It was one of the most noteworthy instances of mass prisoner organizing of the past several decades. It is rare to see organized resistance on different prison yards as the result of the coordinated efforts of prisoner groups conscientiously working together against systemic problems. This has not always been the case; in different periods during the early and mid 20th century this sort of activity was common in American correctional institutions.

Awareness of this kind of popular political consciousness had evaded me. and those who I surrounded myself with throughout my prison sentence. I was in a federal prison only 35 years after the organizing at San Quentin, Folsom, Soledad, Attica, Leavenworth led to widespread uprisings and work strikes; only a single generation had passed. It is not as if incarcerated people are living an anachronistic existence behind the walls, rather they are being actively "shielded" from certain histories. On the weight pile we listened to classic rock and oldies. We read decades-old worn-out books from the prison library and watched classics from the golden era of Hollywood. Yet I never encountered a trace of the history that is potentially more relevant to incarcerated Americans than any other group. I had never heard the names of the movement's primary voices such as George Jackson and Raúl R. Salinas until I encountered them in academia.

The books authored by Jackson are contraband on prison yards – but I assume most prisoners I knew had never heard of the titles or attempted to have a copy mailed. Guys I talked to knew about Attica only as the site of a storied and bloody riot. The "Attica Manifesto" and the anti-racist tenets of the Radical Prison movement are somehow lost to history. I had conversations with hundreds if not thousands of guys at seven different state and federal correctional facilities during my prison sentence and I never heard about any of these histories.

The evolution of my education on the subject matter has led me to understand that knowledge as a whole has been made less readily available to prison populations out of fear that an educated prisoner population will organize and threaten the institutional order. Correctional facilities in the US closely monitor and censor reading material and correspondence in order to prevent the prisoner populations from becoming educated on subjects like political science, US history, and economics for fear that these populations will then become politicized and organized. This is almost certainly what would happen, as it did in the federal prisons during the First World War and then again in state and federal prisons nationwide during the Radical Prison movement of the late 1960s. This threat of prisoner self-awareness and knowledge of their plight is unacceptable to those in power for the simple fact that if prisoners are able to organize enough to achieve a unified platform and voice to confront the institutions, then the prison system, and the justice system more broadly, would not be able to justify its practices before the public. Confronting a unified prisoner front via an open forum is completely out of the question for a system structured on systemic abuse, racism, and economic exploitation. All this may serve to explain how I managed to spend the better part of four years in custody without encountering any prisoner publications or organizations like those I have come across in my research.

Part I:

Prison Censorship

"Order and control must be given priority over all other values."

-San Quentin Prison official,
1972

What's really going on

The legacy of the various incarnations of the prison movement in the 20th century may appear to have been all but erased from the popular memory of the convict population. The reality is this radical left-wing movement still exists, incarnate in various prisoner groups that share common tenets of anti-capitalism and anti-racism. The New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) and United Struggles from Within (USW, an offshoot of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons MIM(Prisons)) are two such organizations. Both uphold the legacy of Radical Prison movement, drawing on global histories of oppressed peoples and arguing against the economic and social structures that have caused the disenfranchisement of already struggling communities. These groups are far left politically, with a political and ideological line of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that situates prisoners as a lumpen proletariat group of potential revolutionaries, whose outlook can be influenced through education and practice (Johnson). The Anarchist Black Cross is another organization committed to politicizing prisoners through education and outreach programs. Publications put out for prisoner consumption by these and other prisoner-oriented groups are censored by prison staff, citing that the writings may pose a security threat; they rarely reach their intended audience. The far-right engages in prisoner outreach but to a lesser extent than the left, and materials from far-right wing organizations like the National Socialist Movement are likewise kept out of the hands of prisoners. The inability of all varieties of political organizations to reach broader prisoner populations through print keeps such organizations on the fringes.

Activist groups have been aggressively suppressed by state and federal prison systems in the decades since the Radical Prison movement threatened to topple the prison regime. Today the movement is still alive but barely visible. Its leaders, voices, and organizers remain in conditions of solitary confinement while prison administrations routinely disapprove (i.e. censor), books, essays, newsletters and personal correspondence found to be critical of prisons and the prison-industrial complex. These conditions make it difficult, if not impossible, for allies in the free world to correspond, let alone coordinate with organizers in prison. Interestingly, it was the prison movement of the 1960s itself that set the wheels in motion for the codification of prison censorship in the US.

The censorship of material entering prisons as well as texts authored by prisoners was the subject of litigation in the 1960s. In 1968, California penal code 2600 ruled in favor of prisoners' constitutional right to possess political literature. Outside organizations like the Black Panther Party and the Weather Underground Organization were instrumental in distributing literature to prison populations nationwide (Cummins, 113). The Radical Prison movement reached a fever pitch during the years that followed.

Immediately following the wave of organizing that culminated in the Attica riot of 1971, prisons heightened restrictions on reading material. Prisoners' rights groups litigated on behalf of prisoners who were increasingly being denied access to 'radical' literature. The materials being deemed radical by the institutions included not just the leftist political literature of the liberation movements, but also materials critical of prisons in general, especially material that brought attention to inhumane treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons (Cummins, 187). Nearly two decades after the height of the Radical Prison movement, multiple US Supreme Court rulings in favor of prisons officially set the current standard, granting institutions full authority to flout prisoners' rights by means of censorship.

Turner v. Safley 482 U.S.78(1987) set an initial standard, wherein it is acceptable for prison regulations to infringe on a prisoner's constitutional rights if doing so is "reasonably related to legitimate penological concerns." Two years later *Thornburgh v. Abbott* 490 U.S.401(1989) more specifically allowed for the censorship of any item that is determined by prison staff to be "detrimental to the security, good order, or discipline of the institution." This is significant because, the judiciary having removed itself from the conversation, prisons were no longer held to any standard but their own regarding censorship and what types of written material constitutes a security concern.

This unchecked power to stop the flow of information to and from prisoner populations tends to be enacted most vigorously against prisoners held in segregation, solitary confinement, or special housing units (SHU). The widespread use of SHU and solitary confinement in facilities nationwide has been denounced by the United Nations as a violation of the UN Convention Against Torture (UN News). The stated purpose of these units is to house gang members, prisoners that are unsafe in the prison's general population, or prisoners that pose a threat to others in general population. Additionally, Special Housing Units have been an indispensable tool for institutions to quiet dissent and political speech. There are regular instances of prisoners being placed in solitary confinement for their criticism or efforts to publish material critical of prisons (McGowan). Once in solitary, these prisoners' communications are easily controlled.

Rashid Johnson, a founder of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, has been in prison since 1990 for a drug charge. For the past 18 years he has been kept in isolation, despite having no enemies or gang affiliations that would keep him out of general population. Johnson contends that maximum security facilities and practices of isolation are in many cases less concerned with gang operations than with potential political organizing. In a 2011 article written by Johnson and posted on the NABPP website, Johnson writes that "the actual

'leaders' officials fear, and who are the prime targets of SHUs and super-maxes are those who are politically conscious and prove able to unite prisoners across racial and other lines."

Like the censorship of reading materials, there is no due process for prisoners when it comes to being housed outside of a prison's general population. The authority given to prisons to operate outside of the law regarding prisoners' rights has enabled them to hobble efforts by prisoners and outside groups to organize and educate the burgeoning prison population.

It is important to note that while this writing focuses on the individuals, groups, and literature associated with radical movements, the issue of prison censorship is widespread, routine, and pervasive in American prisons. It is used not only as a tool to prevent radical left-wing organizing among prisoners, but more broadly to prevent prison populations from having access to research and scholarship in general relating to socioeconomics, the judicial system, U.S. history (particularly black history), civil rights, and the prison-industrial complex. This creates a barrier between millions of incarcerated people and the knowledge that has the potential to spur the kind of widespread prisoner organizing not seen since the era of the Radical Prison movement.

"Disapproved Publications" and the Amerikan Censorship Documentation Project

I will briefly discuss the Amerikan Censorship Documentation Project, an undertaking of the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons. Since 2004, this project has allowed members of the public to report incidences of censorship by mailroom staff. This information is added to an online database with details regarding what material was rejected from which correctional facility and for what reason. The database contains over 450 instances of rejected literature in 2017 alone. MIM(Prisons)'s anonymously authored newsletter *Under Lock & Key* appears on the list frequently; a recent issue was rejected from a state prison in Pennsylvania, having been flagged by mailroom personnel for "advocating solidarity" (prisoncensorship.info). *Under Lock & Key* appears in the database frequently alongside the newsletters from progressive organizations, like the *Coalition for Prisoners Rights, Prison Legal News, The San Francisco Bay View* and others, but the scope of the material being censored is not limited to prisoner-oriented periodicals.

Some departments of corrections compile official lists of publications which are banned in facilities. A read through different prisons' official lists of "disapproved publications" sheds light on the type of material that needs to be kept out of the hands of prisoners. While "disapproved publications" lists are made up largely of material deemed pornographic (pornography is banned in virtually all US prisons), the breadth of work relating to political and social concerns, and economic theory represented in these lists is

startling.

Listed below are a handful of the thousands of titles found on lists of "disapproved publications" or appearing in the *Amerikan Prison Documentation Project* database of censored works:

-*The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander (2010)
-*Celling Black Bodies: Black Women in the Global Prison Industrial Complex* by Julia Sudbury (2005)
-*Fast Feminism* by Shannon Bell (2010)
-*Law Against the People: Essays to Demystify Law, Order, and the Courts* by Robert Lefcourt (1971)
-*Selma 1965* by Charles Fager (1974)
-*The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice* by Jeffrey H Reiman (1979)
-*Organization Means Commitment* by Grace Lee Boggs (1972)
-*Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (1974)
-*The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley* (1965)
-*Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation* by Angela Y. Davis (1971)
-*The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* by Olive Gilbert (1850)

One final, and rather humorous, example of a censored publication serves to encapsulate the dilemma succinctly: the list of "Disapproved Publications July 1987 – September 2009" from the North Carolina Department of Corrections contains a pamphlet from MIM(Prisons) titled "How to Fight Prison Censorship." Prison officials are able to enforce an outrageous and troubling level of censorship of specific histories simply by stating unilaterally that the presence of this material within the institution could constitute a security concern.

Prison censorship in contemporary art practice:
Unauthorized Material and Inmate Activity Book

I have previously worked on projects which incorporate prison censorship via mailroom into my process, confronting its regulations regarding "contraband and unauthorized material" by deploying original works of printed matter into the prison through the mail. These projects hinge on interaction between myself, the potential prisoner audience, and prison staff which functions as a third, intervening audience.

The printed material being deployed are potential works in and of themselves. If the mailroom staff chooses to censor the material, the works expand: the printed matter's journey, the response elicited by it (censorship), its transformation into illegal material and the documentation of its status as contraband. In other words, the interaction with the system on my behalf and the intervention on behalf of the prison staff becomes as much a part of the work as whatever the printed matter happens to be. The documentation of this interaction/rejection through BP-A0238 forms creates the potential for new audiences to see the artifacts of this process in other contexts. I have previously made these documents available online and will show them in a gallery context and in book form.

For a series called *Unauthorized Material* (2015-ongoing) I make high resolution scans of objects that are commonly mailed to prisoners and rejected by mailroom staff, objects like playing cards, pornographic magazines, and blank paper. I make inkjet prints of the scanned images on photo paper and mailed the prints to prisoner recipients/collaborators. Sometimes the printed images of these banned objects are rejected as if they were the banned object and not just a photographic representation. Other times they reach their destination. When rejected, the print is typically returned to me complete with a signed form BP-A0238 (fig.1)

from the mailroom, detailing the reason for rejection. The prisoner who is the addressee in this situation receives a duplicate of the form from the mailroom as well. This paperwork, documenting the object's journey into and back out of the prison, bears witness to and makes material a facet of the power structure that is not normally visible, simultaneously highlighting the absurdity of the structure in practice. The act of making this sort of work somewhat mimics the prohibited act of fashioning a contraband object in an environment like prison.

The other project in which I have engaged mailroom staff is *Inmate Activity Book* (2016-ongoing) (fig.4). I designed a small book of crossword puzzles, word searches, and games for prisoners, using prison humor and colloquialisms. It is a lighthearted piece of memorabilia, yet has been deemed a 'security threat' by more than one institution (remember how the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of prisons determining, for themselves, what constitutes a security threat?). I worked with a federal prisoner who edited its contents, and from the level of censorship we encountered in the editing process it was clear that the work in its final form would likely face censorship in spite of the book's compliance with virtually all regulations regarding content.

I proceeded with the project and sent a copy to an inmate at 65 Federal Correctional Institutions (FCIs) around the US, both male and female facilities, assuming the work would be censored and returned with BP-A0238 forms. These forms would serve to document the censorship of the work and would be displayed along with the censored books and their return packaging in an installation.

Instead I received back only about a dozen rejected copies with accompanying BP-A0238 paperwork. Over 50 copies vanished from mailrooms nationwide, not delivered to prisoners and not returned to me. No BP-A0238 forms or official disapprovals. The simultaneous disappearance of the books from so many facilities coast to coast suggests a

coordinated effort on behalf of the BOP to get rid of a large number of copies of *Inmate Activity Book*. I am using currently using a FOIA request process to try locating the books, so far unsuccessfully.

The book's editor, Anthony J. Ancona reg.#11881-059, was pulled off the recreation yard at Federal Correctional Institution, Sandstone, Minnesota. He was strip searched and brought into a room where he was harassed and questioned by Special Investigative Services (SIS) officers regarding *Inmate Activity Book*. These officers told Ancona to pass along a message to me that I needed to "cool it." This threat from SIS came as huge surprise. SIS officers are vassals of the FBI within the Bureau of Prisons; they are tasked with monitoring communications (mail, telephone, and email) for activity relating to gangs and illegal business. SIS typically concern themselves with serious criminal activity, the type that has implications beyond the prison walls, hence the FBI connection. I got in my fair share of trouble when I was in prison but nothing serious enough that I had to talk to SIS; it struck me that they would take such actions against something so seemingly innocuous as *Inmate Activity Book*. Beyond its existence as a subversive 'zine or performance art, the narrative of *Inmate Activity Book* reveals a deeper layer of the armature of control which exists in the Federal Prison System.

The ability for the BOP to simply disappear 50 copies of my book, or any type of correspondence, without explanation is alarming. More alarming is the ability of federal agents to threaten, humiliate, and harass a prisoner on the grounds that they collaborated on an art project. Around this time the chairperson of my department at the University of Minnesota also received a hostile email from a BOP employee regarding the book, wanting to know whether the university was funding the project. This prompted conversations at the highest level of the administration and eventually the university's legal counsel, who assured us that we had nothing to worry about from the BOP. This string of incidents connected to

the activity book indicated to me that mailroom work has serious potential as terrain for subversive creative play, and that BOP is quick to raise the stakes.

The lack of accountability required of prisons has made possible not only the censorship but the outright confiscation/disposal of correspondence to and from prisoners. The disappearance of the more than 50 copies of *Inmate Activity Book* was a combination of censorship and theft by the BOP. According to regulations in the Federal Bureau of Prisons Mail Management Manual, correspondence containing 'serious contraband' will be held indefinitely and not returned to sender. The examples given of 'serious contraband' are illegal drugs, firearms, and weapons (Mail Management Manual, 26). *Inmate Activity Book* apparently made the cut as 'serious contraband', making it a candidate for disappearance without recourse.

The practical explorations of censorship at the crux of *Unauthorized Material* and *Inmate Activity Book* reveals how the First Amendment freedoms of prisoners and their correspondents are infringed upon routinely and flippantly, and how important it is to officials that the institution remain in total control what material is consumed by prisoners. These projects laid the groundwork for what would become a more ambitious, research-based project addressing the bigger picture; the history of free speech and how the Federal Bureau of Prisons has been instrumental in suppressing political dissent since its inception over a century ago.

Memorial Trays is the first "installment" of my body of work *The Leavenworth Project.* The narrative contained within the work suggests that the justice system has systematically worked to undermine political activists and organized labor since long before the Radical Prison movement of the 1960s and the Supreme Court decisions that have enabled the widespread censorship of political and non-political material in American prisons to this day. By memorializing newspaper editors, union workers, labor organizers, and conscientious

objectors imprisoned at Leavenworth during World War I, *Memorial Trays* investigates the origins of how and why dissent became criminalized in America, underscoring how the Department of Justice has been weaponized against Americans in order to serve capitalism.

Part II:

An American Institution

"I suggest that we give him ten years in Leavenworth, or eleven years in Twelveworth."

-Groucho Marx
1933

Leavenworth, Kansas

Leavenworth, Kansas is home to several historic American institutions including Fort Leavenworth and USP Leavenworth, the infamous federal penitentiary. Both have played a significant role in the history of the United States. Fort Leavenworth is an Army installation established in 1827 that was critical to the success of western expansion of the United States, the civil war, and each subsequent war in which the US has been involved. Expeditions to conquer New Mexico and California were led from Fort Leavenworth. The Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth is responsible for the military education of tens of thousands of US Army officers, including Generals Douglas MacArthur and Dwight Eisenhower. The US Disciplinary Barracks is the military prison established at Fort Leavenworth in 1875 that still houses service members convicted at court-martial. USP Leavenworth, the federal prison located near Fort Leavenworth, has housed civilian offenders since 1895. One of the original federal prisons created under the 3 Prisons Act of 1891, USP Leavenworth lies at the intersection of several important 20th-century social narratives. Its story is the basis for the works *Memorial Trays* and *One Ton Ježek,* which together are my thesis work and the first installment *The Leavenworth Project.*

I first became aware of Leavenworth Penitentiary's extraordinary history while researching its role in the Radical Prison movement of the late 1960s. Organized prisoners at Leavenworth coordinated with prisoners nationwide in acts of resistance in during the height of the movement (Gomez 82). A deeper look into the history of the facility revealed left-wing political education and organizing between prisoners outside groups as far back as the Labor movement of the early 1900s.

Though it still houses prisoners, the facility's days of infamy are past; USP Leavenworth is now a medium security Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), though its legacy as a United Stated Penitentiary was deemed significant enough for it to retain the name "USP Leavenworth." In spite of its exceptional history through the past century, USP Leavenworth has blended into the modern landscape of the carceral state. The Bureau of Prisons' success in suppressing a hundred-year legacy of inmate political speech and organizing is evident from the degree to which it has neutralized the destabilizing force of organized and educated prisoners at places like USP Leavenworth.

The history of Leavenworth, Kansas and its institutions up through the present represents a microcosm of United States history in several regards: colonial expansion, national security infrastructure, the social unrest of the early and mid 20th century, militarization, the surveillance state, mass incarceration, and the rise of the prison-industrial complex are all threads in the Leavenworth tapestry. The first installment of *The Leavenworth Project* hones in on USP Leavenworth during the years 1917-1923. *Memorial Trays* and *One Ton Ježek* honor early 20th-century political prisoners who were arrested and convicted for speaking out or publishing material opposing our nation's involvement in World War I. I am engaging this history a time in America when the free press is under attack daily by President Donald Trump and we are reconsidering where memorials fit in our contemporary cultural fabric, which histories are to be privileged with public commemoration. The implications of the histories behind *Memorial Trays* and *One Ton Ježek* situate *The Leavenworth Project* within urgent conversations regarding issues of free speech and our national history as narrated publicly through monuments and memorials.

Ways of remembering:

Memorial Trays and One Ton Ježek

The installation of *Memorial Trays* and *One Ton Ježek,* consists of a large-scale sculpture presented alongside a series of cafeteria trays which have been individualized with histories of political prisoners incarcerated at USP Leavenworth during the First World War. This memorial commemorates political prisoners jailed under the Espionage Act, Sedition Act, and Selective Service Act. The trays are displayed with a series of wooden shipping crates, each built to house a single *Memorial Tray* on its journey to USP Leavenworth, the intended destination of these commemorative objects.

Taking into consideration the rejection, censorship, and outright disappearance of previous works of mine that involved mail and the Bureau of Prisons (see *Prison Censorship in Contemporary Art Practice),* I decided to use a different approach in regard to the transmission of *Memorial Trays.* By creating letterpress plates to print the biographical information of prisoners on the trays and constructing heavy-duty, fine art shipping crates for individual trays, the trays become imbued with a preciousness and weight that I hoped would not be readily ignored or disposed of. At least they would command some kind of attention upon reaching their destination at the prison, if for no other reason than being a somewhat suspicious object. The crates are addressed to Nicole English, the warden of USP Leavenworth, and are being shipped one by one through FedEx with a signature required upon delivery to the prison warehouse. Contained on the outside of the crate is a letter to the warden explaining the basis of *The Leavenworth Project* and *Memorial Trays,* along with instructions for displaying the trays inside the prison and a request for documentation of the *Memorial Trays* on display within USP Leavenworth. During the thesis exhibition, the first

Memorial Tray was shipped to USP Leavenworth and was signed for by an officer at the prison. I have so far received back no correspondence from anyone at the prison, and I am preparing to send the second *Memorial Tray*. I will continue to send crated trays, assuming that I will eventually get some kind of response. Though I do not know what that response will look like, it will largely determine the future direction of the project.

Memorial /Monument / Anti-Monument

The sculptural component of the installation was not initially conceptualized as an exploration of Leavenworth's history specifically but as a "monument" to the prison movement more broadly. I envisioned this monument as a large-scale sculpture in the form of a Czech hedgehog, or *ježek*, made from plastic cafeteria trays housed in a steel framework, displayed in the Katherine E. Nash Gallery. The form of the *ježek* connotes stalwart resistance, their practical purpose is to provide anti-tank protection to infantry troops. I have used the cafeteria tray and cafeteria motif in other works, the chow hall being a common flashpoint for group disturbances such as riots or strikes. The idea of the using the form of the *ježek* with cafeteria trays seemed an appropriate form for commemorating prisoner resistance.

Though monument and memorial are not mutually exclusive, using *memorial* instead of *monument* became an important distinction to make once I had become better acquainted with the history and discourse around monuments. I became less inclined to construct a singular, massive sculpture and call it a monument, a process that mimics the didactic and static mode of historic representation that is the very hallmark of austere authority. I was potentially disregarding the movement's many complex histories as well as its legacy in prison systems today. A definite contradiction arose when I became aware of the work of the NABPP-PC, MIM(Prisons) and USW. It no longer made sense to commemorate the broader prison movement as something in the past, having knowledge of these organizations and their current efforts.

Questioning my motivation to create a "monument" and what (or whom) I was actually commemorating prompted further research and attendance at a panel discussion entitled

"Down with Monuments (?)" at the School of the Art Institute. Those on the panel addressed the topic of monument and memorial from various perspectives, historic, sociopolitical, and artistic, in an effort to suss out the nuance of the hot-button issue of the place Confederate monuments and other problematic memorials have in our cities' public spaces.

Which histories have the privilege of being represented through these forms? Which narrative assumes supremacy? There is a highly visible effort for the removal of monuments and memorials, like those dedicated to Confederate generals, from public spaces. Others contend that these memorials need to remain in place as reminders, in spite of what they represent, lest we forget history. Others revere the racist legacy represented through these forms and fear their removal means the erosion of that legacy.

The polarized political climate in the US under the Trump Administration has brought this issue to the fore. This is not an anomaly: "Moments of significant transformation or the outright crisis of the social status quo are often marked by heated debates in the public sphere including as to who/why/where possesses the right to commemorate and be commemorated in/through the monuments" (Krzyżanowska 469). As the debate about over these problematic representations of history has become a national conversation, acknowledgement of histories that challenge or present alternatives to the dominant narrative has become urgent. Our forms of collective remembrance are key to forming our national identity, which is no doubt undergoing transformation or "outright crisis." Whatever fate awaits the embattled Confederate monuments in the public realm, other histories need to be recognized and given form in ways which challenge the limitations of traditional forms of commemoration.

Although the gesture of commemorating prisoners, executed on a large scale with cafeteria trays as material, is clearly working to subvert the notion of the monument as an austere and permanent emblem of the establishment, it was potentially *as* didactic and static

as the visual tradition of monument it attempts to co-opt and undermine. This commemoration of an historic narrative that transgresses the dominant one is intended as a prompt, not a point of closure. The presentation/preservation of any history in the finalized and infallible form of monument subjects that history to a dangerous kind of removal from memory.

Critic James E. Young writes that monumental commemorative forms are "a big rock telling people what to think; it's a big form that pretends to have a meaning, that sustains itself for eternity, that never changes over time, never evolves—it fixes history, it embalms or somehow stultifies it." In my desire to move beyond the monument builders' mummified representation of history I expanded my understanding of which commemorative forms and gestures artists have employed to awaken or activate complex histories.

The terms *anti-monument* and *counter-monument* have been generally used interchangeably by historians and critics. Other iterations include the German *Gegendenkmal,* non-monument, deconstructive, non-traditional, and counter-hegemonic monument (Stevens 952). Young's writings on Holocaust memorials provide the foundation for a theory of the non-monumental. "For Young, counter-monuments are those which reject and renegotiate 'the traditional forms and reasons for public memorial art', such as prominence and durability, figurative representation and the glorification of past deeds" (Stevens 952).

Counter-monuments encourage different modes of interaction with the past, often eschewing formal traditions, like medium and scale, associated with traditional monuments (Kryznanawska 466). Gunter Denmig's *Stolpersteine* (Stumbling Blocks) Holocaust memorial work serves as one of the most written about anti-monumental works, quietly occupying space in streets and sidewalks across Germany. *Stolpersteine* are inscribed with the names of individuals who lived at the locations, allowing passersby to engage in an intimate and

personal dialogue with specific places and individual histories.

Another oft written about example of anti-monument is Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz's 1986 *Monument against Fascism, War and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights* located in Hamburg. The public was invited to write their names on the surface of a twelve-meter column in a pledge to oppose fascism. Over the course of several years the column was lowered into the ground, eventually disappearing entirely. These commemorations are non-static, allowing for the histories in question to be in conversation with the present in ways that traditional forms cannot.

Anti-monumental works favor a dialogic approach over the didacticism of monuments; this became my challenge in taking the work beyond the singular monumental object. How to reposition the work where it might assume the dynamic nature of the anti-monument? My prison-movement-monument concept lacked *specificity*. My research around monuments raised concerns that my proposed sculpture was missing a link to a specific instance, period, location, or group associated with the prison movement. Prison activism took different forms and involved diverse groups nationally, occurring over the span of several decades; addressing a specific narrative would provide a geographic location for the work to engage with.

Leavenworth offers both a singularly important narrative and an actual *place* for the work to engage. The idea of building a monument to the prison movement is vague, and "embalming" that history while prisoners like Rashid Johnson struggle to keep the movement alive from their solitary confinement units seems counter-productive to the movement. Additionally, the complete physical/spatial detachment of the work from the histories that it aimed to address would leave the work unresolved.

The piece *One Ton Ježek* is anti-monument borrowing from the language of the monumental, subverting it through material choice and use of militaristic symbol of the *ježek*.

"Conventional monumental forms may be incorporated into the [anti-monumental] design for their ironic or jarring effects." The use of mass produced weathered plastic components to complete the form is also characteristic of the anti-monument, "contrasting conventional solidity" while still conveying a sense of incredible density (Stevens 958-959).

Memorial Trays assume a different role as they travel through the mail into the prison. Mailing a personal memorial in the form of an individualized crated cafeteria tray to the prison itself at allows the memorial to physically inhabit the actual location of that narrative, passing through layers of security and itself becoming wholly subject to procedure and protocol. The commemorative object is an anomaly for the prison staff. It is doubtful the warden often receive crates marked "Fragile Art" which, to open, require the actual removal of screws. Gestures like this are described in the discourse of the anti-monumental as a commemorative form that is "fragmented rather than unified in a single, orderly composition at a single location" (Stevens 956).

Function and Audience
Gallery / Prison

Memorial Trays are accessible to those who encounter the project in a gallery context until the trays are shipped to USP Leavenworth, at which point their audience will be determined by what Warden English decides to do with the trays. The letter contained with the packaging materials requests the trays be displayed within the prison where they can be read by both prisoners and staff members. The warden is being given the choice, outright, to educate her coworkers and the residents of her prison on an important and relevant period in the institution's history. Maybe the stories on the trays will have an impact on the warden herself. I will continue shipping *Memorial Trays* to USP Leavenworth as I continue working on this project and producing further installments of the work.

The installation of *One Ton Ježek* and *Memorial Trays* inside the Katherine E. Nash Gallery is accompanied by a timeline, written by hand on the wall, marking the major events that have transpired at Fort Leavenworth and USP Leavenworth, from the fort's founding in 1827 to the release of Chelsea Manning from the US Disciplinary Barracks in 2017. Along with this didactic information, two early 20th-century artifacts are presented inside a vitrine. One is a September 1919 issue of Socialist Magazine *The Liberator,* containing a piece written by a conscientious objector imprisoned at the US Disciplinary Barracks titled "The U.S. Revolutionary Training Institute." The other is a copy of "An Open Letter to the President from 52 Members of the I.W.W. Leavenworth Penitentiary Who Refuse to Apply for Individual Clemency", penned in 1922. These primary sources area also important relics from the legacy of solidarity and resistance being addressed in *Memorial Trays* and *One Ton Ježek*.

Part III:

On Practice, *The Institutions*, and Institutional Signifiers

"By bringing out into the public domain how human institutions actually behave, we can understand frankly, to a degree, for the first time the civilization that we actually have."

-Julian Assange
2016

School$, hospital$, and prison$

My practice and research are centered around American institutions. I am interested in the dynamics between the institution and the individual, as well as how institutions interact with and depend on one another. My experience serving time in the US Bureau of Prisons (BOP) informs my practice and serves as an entry point to a broader range of issues: the prison conversation is a conversation about class, race, policing, education, healthcare and gender.

Owing to capitalism, the institutions which Foucault described as agents of social control have likewise become functions of business. Students, the sick, and prisoners equate to capital gains. The principles of institutional control explored by Foucault are still in place and actively maintaining a social status quo; additionally, there are now unprecedented levels of capital tied to the continued functioning and growth of these institutions. This compounds the problem. The act of controlling millions of bodies now means the upward flow of billions of dollars. This connection between social control and the market implicates a vast network of institutional interdependence that will include financial institutions, corporate communication, and so on. I take interest in this model of social control via mercenary corporate practices and the forms of inter-institutional contamination and collusion it might promote. My work on this very project is partly a function of the art department at the University of Minnesota, a Research 1 university that has recently used prison labor as a means of cost cutting. There is almost no escaping the implications of this network.

Predictably, the institutions of art and culture have likewise been subsumed under this model. Artist and writer Hito Steyerl contends that the art field has become "a place of power mongering, speculation, financial engineering, and massive and crooked

manipulation" (Steyerl 99). By acknowledging the ubiquity and collusion of the institutions and their common directive to control and manipulate the masses and therefore the market, the prison problem comes into focus as a symptom of larger capitalist machinations.

I notice the unsettling similarities/coordination/co-existence of the institutions around me and a trend toward the reduction of us as individuals into more easily manageable units. It is worthwhile to attempt to examine and define this omnipresent order, that we further articulate our relationship to institutional power while we have the agency to do so. My practice probes this architecture of control, situating institutional signifiers in dialogue with each other, with audiences, and with the institutions themselves.

Signifier and signified

In studio, I deal in a material and formal language that is patently *institutional*. I use found relics and paperwork from schools and prisons, in addition to materials like steel bars and grey enamel. The democratic use of institutional signifiers and gestures in my work creates potentialities for the imaginative use and (re)combination of materials and symbols to evoke meaning. Using signs of power and the institutional as a formal language can prompt alternate lines of thought, enabling new articulations of *the system* through a cosmology of signifiers. The signified (the institutional structure and its proxies) can be mirrored, mocked, subverted, and confused through formal maneuvers and gestures. This happens in the context of the gallery, the university, the mailroom, the cell block.

In practice, this strategy of re-sorting and merging the signs and sites of power has taken various forms: from my undergraduate thesis exhibition *McCarthyism* (fig.2), to recent works like *Mess* (fig.3), *Inmate Activity Book* (fig.4), and *Secure Installation* (fig.5).

The *Leavenworth Project* is a sequence of signs and actions that, while focusing on Leavenworth, pursues this idea of the pan-institutional model by situating signifiers and gestures in different institutional contexts simultaneously.

The military installation Fort Leavenworth has stood alongside USP Leavenworth by the Missouri river for over a century. Their histories reflect the rise of the military-industrial complex and the prison-industrial complex, an American narrative taking shape in the heart of the Midwest. The form of the *ježek* is overtly militaristic, an archetypal form adapted from European tank warfare that I use to evoke the power of military and the notion of a combat zone. The steel bar construction of the piece's frame echoes security bar construction, a motif in my work. The steel framework serves to hold in place the plastic cafeteria trays. Both

materials, combined in the militaristic form, constitute a new articulation, suggesting power structures as correlatives by collapsing their signs together.

The tray is a potent and adaptable part of the vocabulary of institutional signifiers. The same design used in school, hospital, and prison cafeterias; as objects they stand for the regimentation and organization of people and activities. Each tray also suggests a person that may have held it, standing in for bodies themselves that are subjected to these disciplines. Around half of the nearly 1,000 trays are various flesh tones, further suggesting this connection to ordered bodies. Those deployed as *Memorial Trays* take on added weight as signifiers of individual bodies in that they each commemorate a specific person.

What makes the trays effective is their universality in terms of institutional association. These objects are associated with mess halls and cafeterias, which are not specific to any single type of institution but rather are a characteristic of institutions. Thus the cafeteria tray is able to function as a sort of variable within the cosmology of institutional signifiers, able to evoke a spectrum of associations from the pedagogical to the penological.

Historically the cafeteria been a charged site within institutions. A place where the masses gather and converse, it is associated with riots and strikes. Discipline and order find some of their most harsh expressions in the cafeterias and mess halls of penal institutions. In the Civil Rights movement, the segregated school cafeteria was a loaded environment. I made *Mess* (fig.3), an installation and printed piece, as an exploration of the theme of the institutional cafeteria. The installation included school cafeteria table tops, trays, and lines on the floor suggesting a predetermined (controlled) movement of bodies through the space; arranged in a manner that mirrored the experience of viewing work in a museum or gallery, thus including those institutions in the conversation of control

The printed work that accompanies *Mess* pairs found black and white images of institutional dining spaces alongside early 20th-century newspaper clippings reporting

incidents of violent uprisings in the mess halls of various prisons (fig.3). The photographs from the Library of Congress' collection depict spaces like the Carlisle Indian School and segregated school cafeterias. While each image and text carries its own unique and relevant history, the gesture of coupling these particular images and texts aims to address aspects of control rather than specific histories of cafeterias; the collapsing of multiple institutions' signs into a single form addresses the institutional superstructure.

By the same token, *The Leavenworth Project*'s scope is beyond what is carried in its name; it calls into question the histories, values, and functions of our nation and its institutions more broadly.

BP-A0328 **STAMPS, NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT & OTHER RETURNED TO SENDER** CDFRM
APR 11

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE **FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS**

TO: (Sender - See Return Address)	FROM: (Institution)
D. McCarthy 405 21st Ave. South Minneapolis, MN 55455	FCI Sheridan, Attn: Mailroom 27072 Ballston Road Sheridan, Oregon 97378

INMATE'S NAME:	REGISTER NUMBER:	DATE:
Gregory Brooks	75571-065	December 13, 2016

Check all that apply:

Material Rejected and Returned

Your correspondence has been examined and:

		You enclosed stamps or stamped items that cannot be given to the inmate.
		You enclosed a negotiable instrument. Negotiable instruments are to be forwarded to the National Lockbox at the following address: Federal Bureau of Prisons [ ] [ ] Post Office Box 474701 Des Moines, Iowa 50947-0001
		You enclosed the following unauthorized material:
		Stationary/Blank Greeting Cards
		Plant Shavings
		Sexually Explicit Personal Photos
	✓	Other (specify below)
		The following material cannot be inspected without damage:
		Electronic Musical Greeting Card
		Padded Card
		Double Faced Polaroid Photos
		Other (specify below)
		Your correspondence or letter has, however, been provided to the inmate with a copy of this notice.

Package Refused and Returned

The contents of your correspondence have NOT been examined, however it is being returned to you because:

	The inmate has failed to obtain an authorized BP-331, Authorization to Receive Package or Property.
	The package has not been properly marked "Authorized by Bureau Policy" in accordance with Program Statement 5800.16, Mail Management Manual, or fails to reasonably indicate the package is authorized by Bureau policy.
	The inmate recipient could not be identified due to missing, incorrect, or an illegible name and/or register number.

Specific Material Returned:

1 book: Federal Prison Activity Book. Rejected due to security concerns.

(Printed or Typed Name and Written Signature of Correctional Systems Officer)

L. Pauly, CMC / Pauly

Record Copy - Addressee (with material); Copy - Inmate; Copy - Mail Room File.
PDF Prescribed by P5800 Replaces BP-328.058 of APR 94

fig 1.

fig 2.

KILLED IN PRISON MUTINY.

Two Other San Quentin Convicts Wounded in Food Riots.

SAN QUENTIN Cal. June 9.—A continuation to-day of the food strike begun yesterday in San Quentin Prison developed into a riot in the general mess hall as a result of which one prisoner was shot and killed and two were wounded.

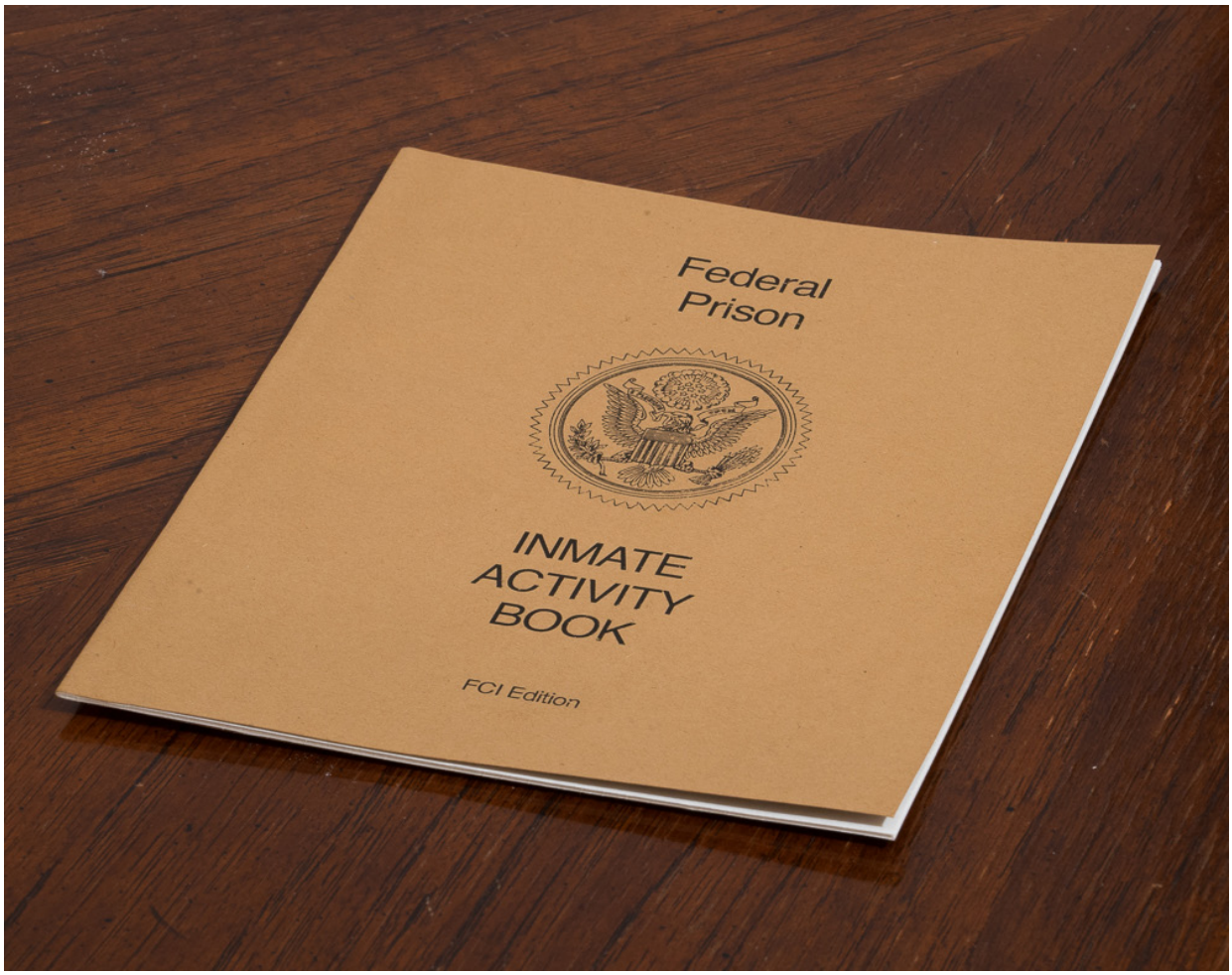
H. L. Lynwood, a naval prisoner serving a term of six and a half years for desertion and impersonating an officer, was killed. A negro serving twenty years for robbery was shot through the hand, and another man was shot in the leg by a glancing bullet.

Nineteen hundred prisoners were sitting down to dinner when 200 or 300 of the men began a concerted demonstration. Not content with voicing their protests with shrieks and cat calls, they began throwing dishes and food. Some made a rush for the kitchen and began hurling heavy pots and pans around the room. The men were driven out with hose spouting steam, several of the rioters being severely burned, and the prison bell was sounded with the "lock up" signal.

At one of the three exits from the dining hall several of the rioters gathered and endeavored to block egress, their purpose being to prolong the demonstration. Here Lynwood, one of the leaders of the mutineers, was shot down and the other two were wounded.

The prisoners were quickly marched to their cells, but even after being locked up continued their shrieks of defiance.

fig 3.


Federal
Prison
INMATE
ACTIVITY
BOOK
FCI Edition
fig 4.


EXIT
Department of Art
Advising
Main Office
fig 5.

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Image List

1. Installation view of *One Ton Ježek,* 10'x10'x8', steel and cafeteria trays, 2018

2,3. Details of *One Ton Ježek,*

4. Installation view

5. Shipping crate for *Memorial Trays* 6"x17"x14", wood, hardware, spraypaint, ethafoam, shipping labels, 2018

6. Installation view

7. Instructions for hanging *Memorial Trays*, included with each shipping crate, 8.5"x11", LaserJet print, 2018

8. Letter to Warden Nicole English, 8.5"x11", included with each shipping crate, LaserJet print, 2018

9. Installation view of *Leavenworth Timeline, 1827-present*, graphite on wall, 2018

10. Detail of *Leavenworth Timeline, 1827-present*

11. *This is What Happened at Leavenworth – The Takeaway* (ed. of 80), 5"x15", letterpress, 2018

12. Installation view of shipping crates for *Memorial Trays,* 6"x17"x14" each, 2018

13. Installation view of *Memorial Trays,* dimensions variable, letterpress printed labels on cafeteria trays, 2018

14. Installation view

15. Detail of *Memorial Trays*

16,17,18. Details of *Memorial Trays*

19. Installation view of *Memorial Trays,* and archive materials, 2018

20. "An Open Letter to President Harding, From 52 Members of the I.W.W. in Leavenworth Penitentiary Who Refuse to Apply for Individual Clemency", archive material, 1922

21. Detail of "An Open Letter to President Harding…"

22. Detail of *The Liberator* magazine, archive material, 1919

23,24. Process shots (crate for *Memorial Tray)*, 2018

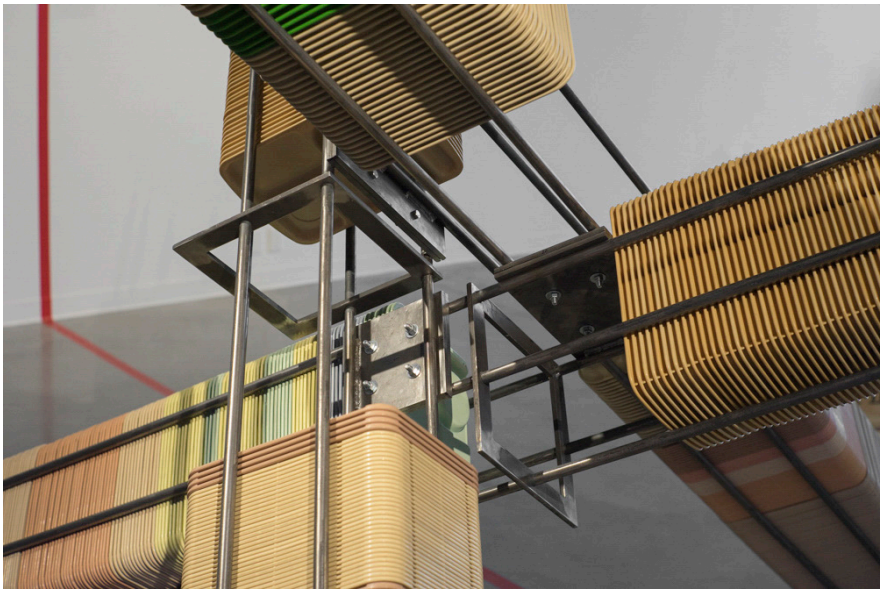
25. Screenshot, confirmation of delivery of first *Memorial Tray* to Leavenworth Penitentiary, 2018

The Leavenworth Project

Images of *One Ton Ježek, Memorial Trays,* and *Leavenworth Timeline 1827-present*

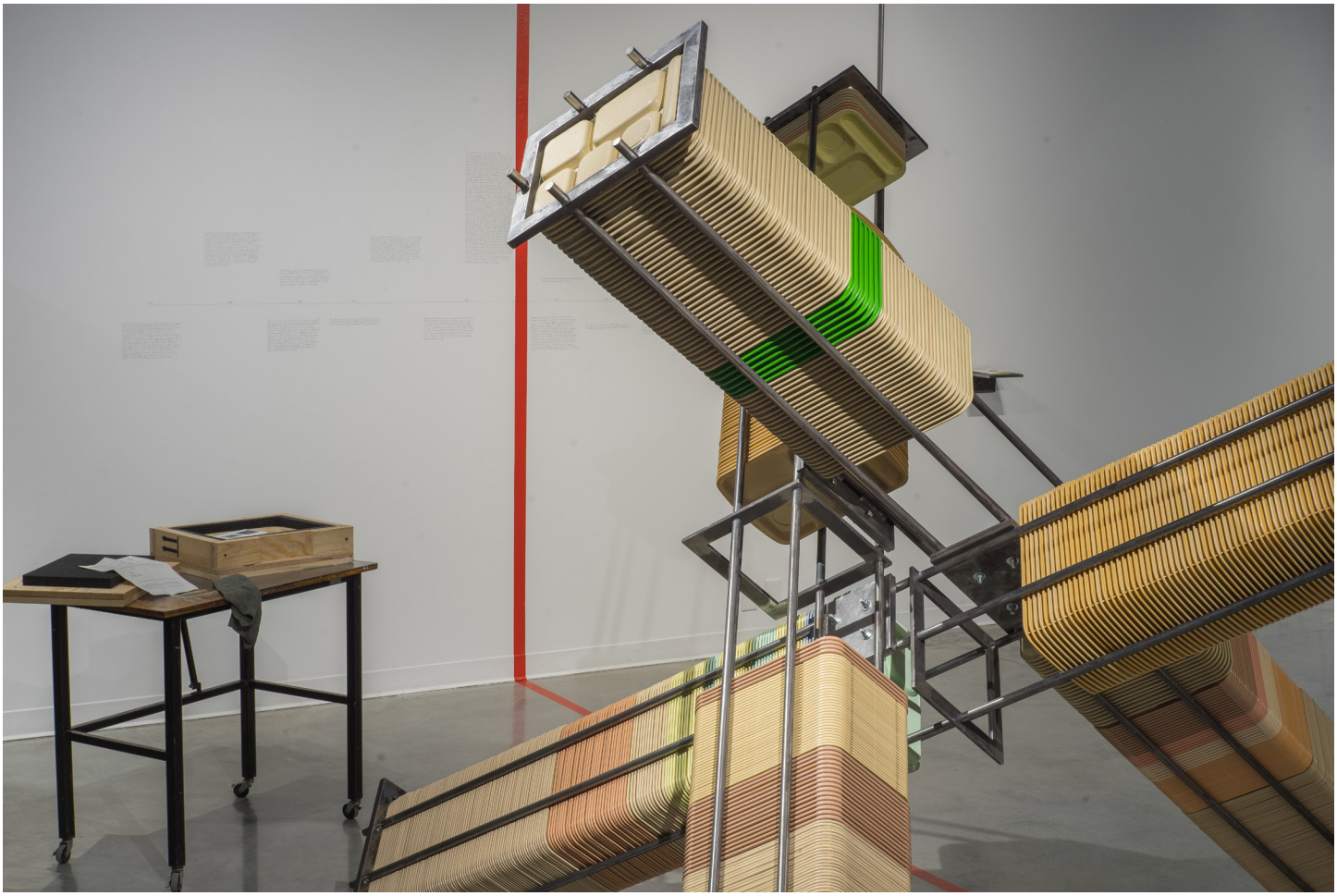
Katherine E. Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota, 2018

1.



2.

3.



4.

5.


The Lieutenants Project
Dear Student English,
Thank you for participating.
D.M. Clifford
Artist & Curatorial Coordinator
The Lieutenants Project

6.

The Leavenworth Project
P.O. Box 3782
Minneapolis, MN, 55403
www.leavenworthproject.com
info@leavenworthproject.com

Dear Warden English,

The Leavenworth Project is a research initiative exploring the stories of the institutions at Leavenworth, Kansas. Fort Leavenworth, the United States Disciplinary Barracks, and USP Leavenworth each has a special place in our nation's history. Our goal at the Leavenworth Project is to unearth these stories in an effort to better understand the American narrative.

Memorial Trays are reclaimed cafeteria trays with letterpress printed labels commemorating the incarceration of anti-war activists, newspaper editors, and union laborers during World War I. In 1917 and 1918, tens of thousands of Americans were charged under the Espionage Act, Sedition Act, and the Selective Service Act. Thousands of these individuals were convicted and many of them served sentences at USP Leavenworth and the United States Disciplinary Barracks. Each *Memorial Tray* honors the memory of one of these individuals at the location of their incarceration.

Memorial Trays should be displayed where they can be viewed by both inmates and staff. Suggestions for display are included. We encourage you and your staff to document these memorials and share any photos and stories with us here at The Leavenworth Project.

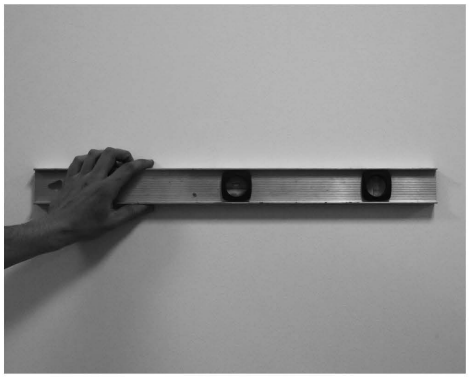
Thank you for participating,

D.M. Clifford
Arts & Outreach Coordinator
The Leavenworth Project

"It is my opinion that none of these men were properly convicted, because I think that the indictments were vitally defective. I do not think that if I had been on the jury, I would have convicted a single one of them, because their was no evidence."

-Major Alexander Lanier, Bureau of Military Intelligence, commenting on one of the mass trials of 1917

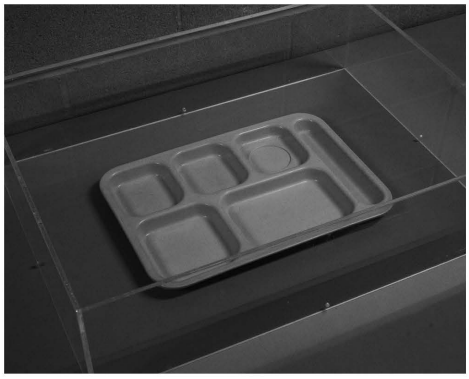
Suggestions for displaying Memorial Trays



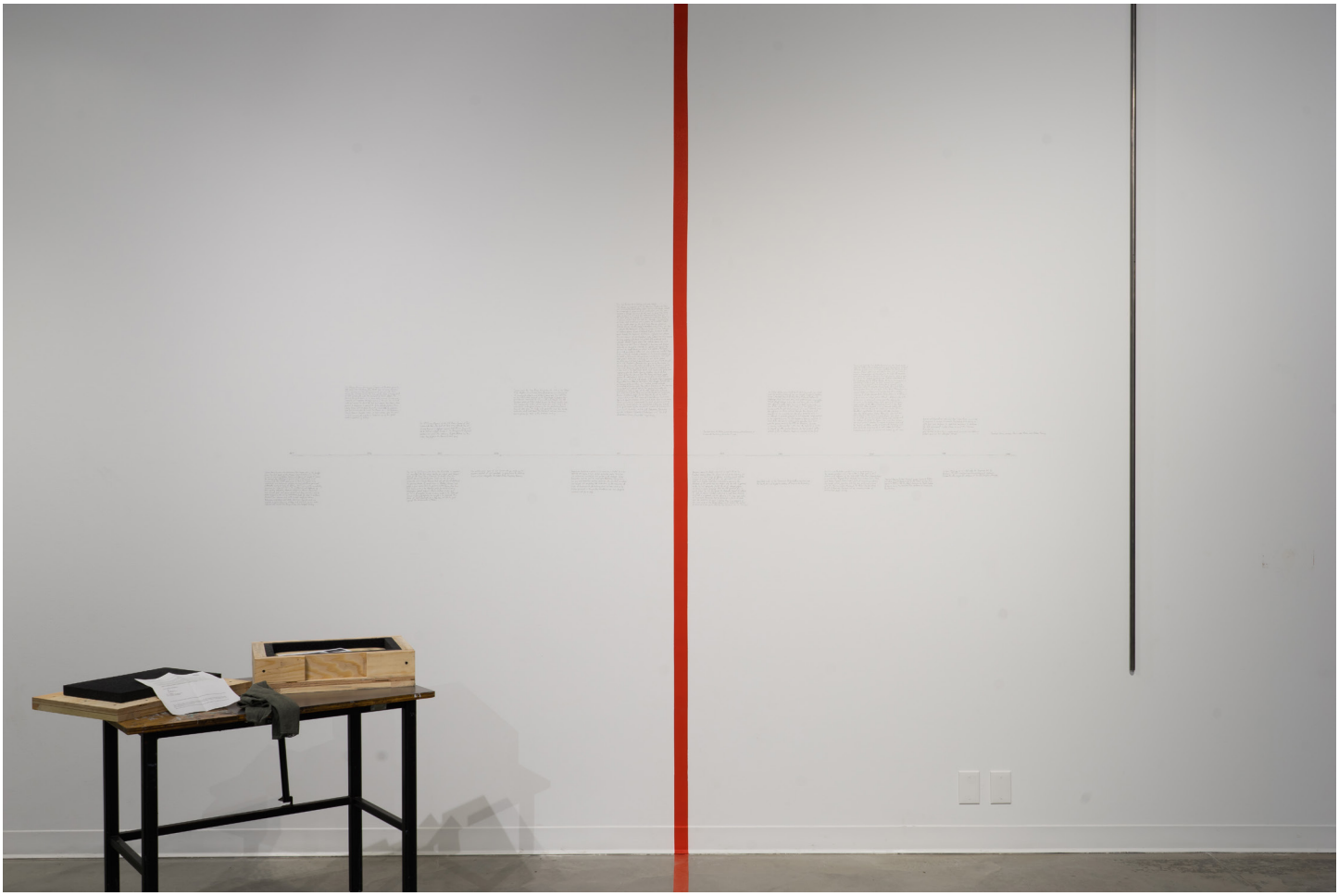
Use a level to mark where the tray will be displayed

Set the tray directly on appropriate hardware or use a small shelf

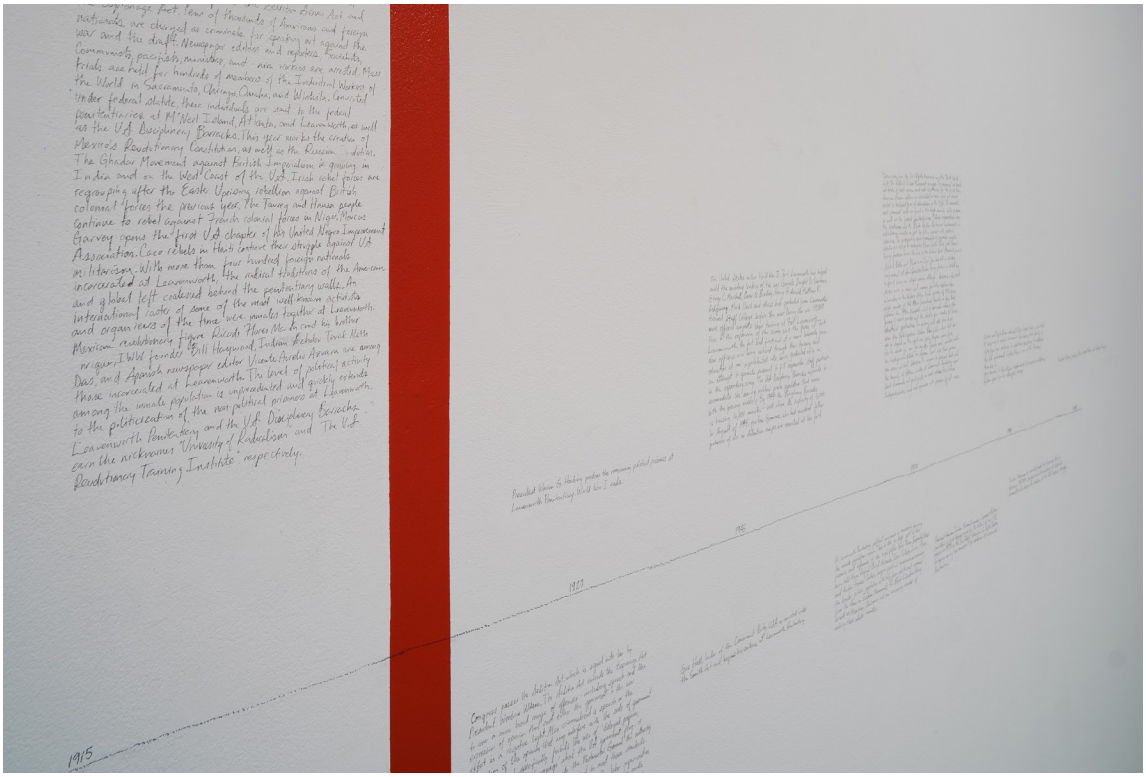
The tray weighs 18 oz. and does not require a stud for wall display



The tray can also be displayed behind glass or plexiglass



9.



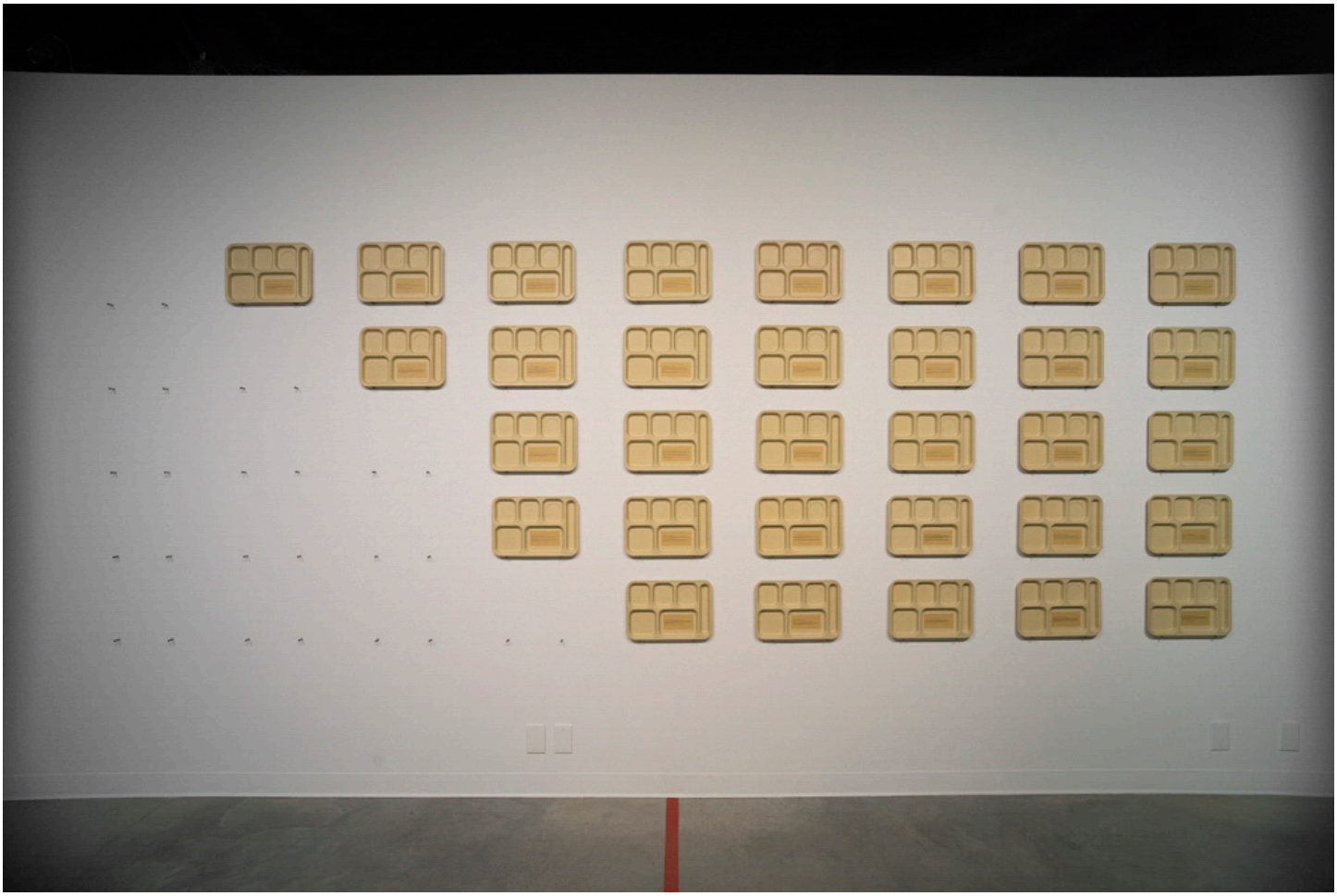
10.


this is
—
What Happened at Leavenworth
—
the takeaway

11.


FRAGILE ART

12.



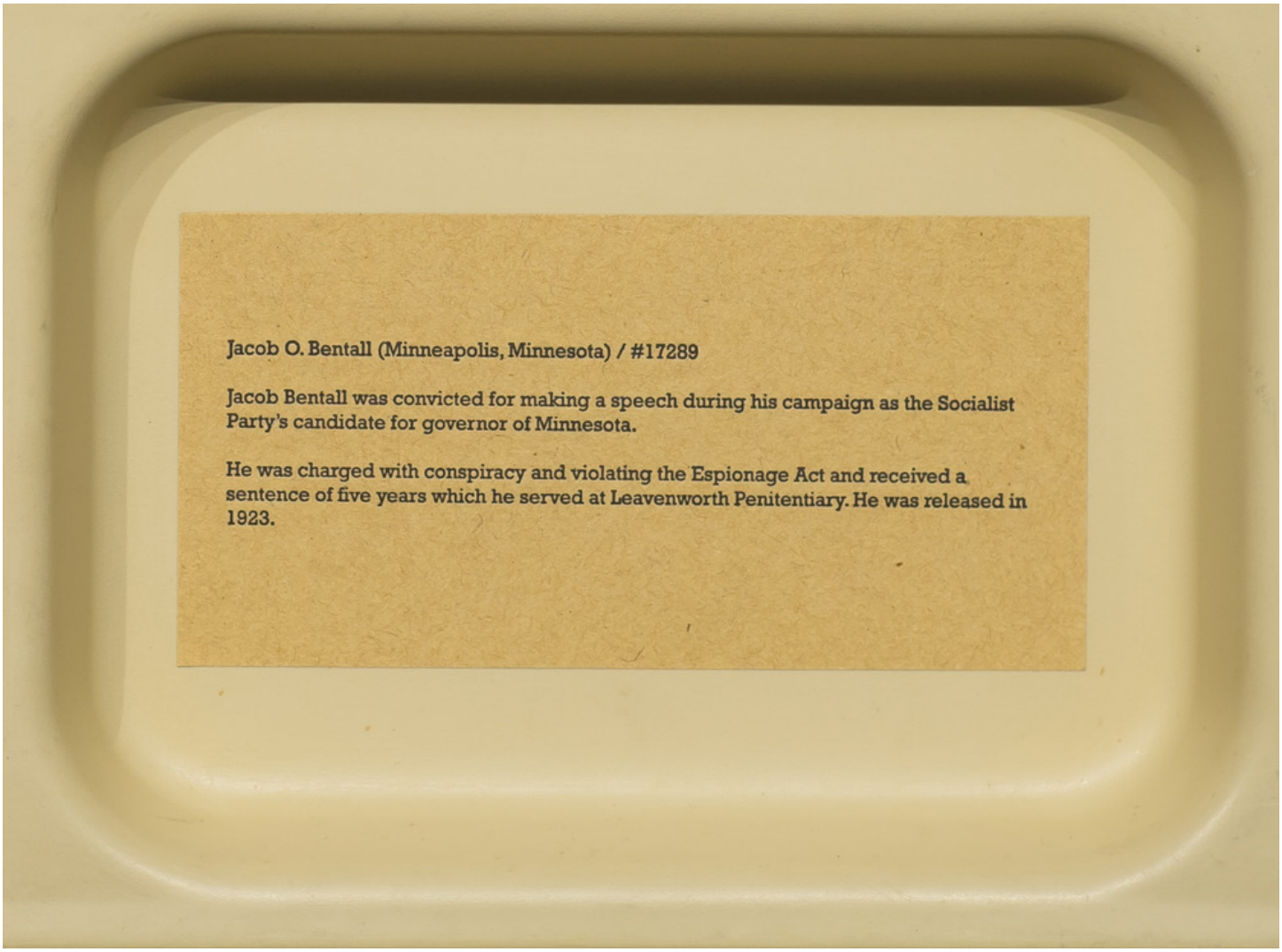
13.

14.

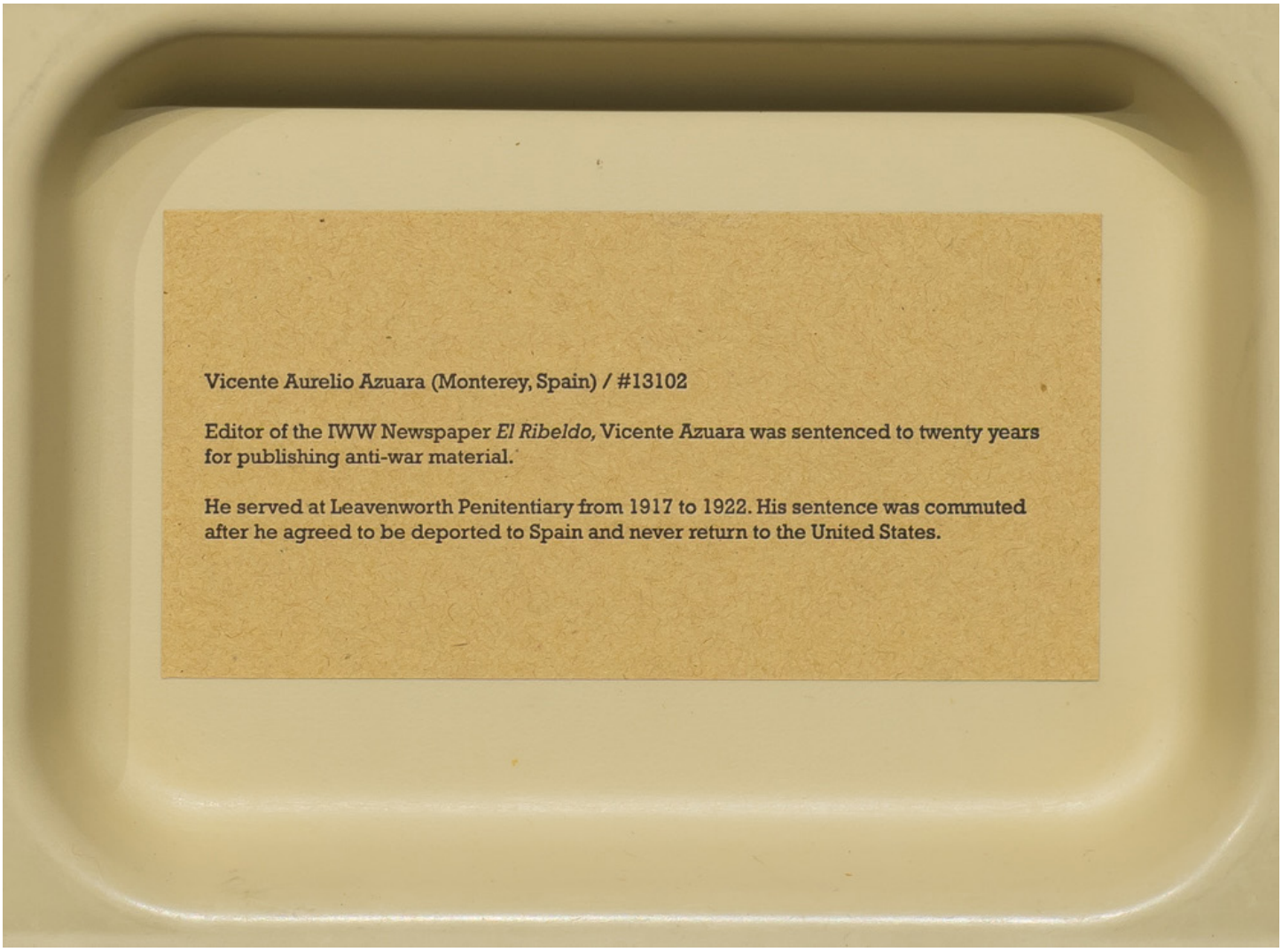
15.


Ricardo Flores Magón (Mexico City, Mexico) / #14596
An important figure in the Mexican Revolution and president of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), Magón was editor of the Los Angeles-based newspaper *Regeneración*.
He was charged under the Espionage Act for publishing anti-war material in *Regeneración*, and was sentenced to twenty-one years for "obstructing the war effort."
Magón suffered from health problems that went untreated at Leavenworth, where he was found dead in his cell in 1922.

16.

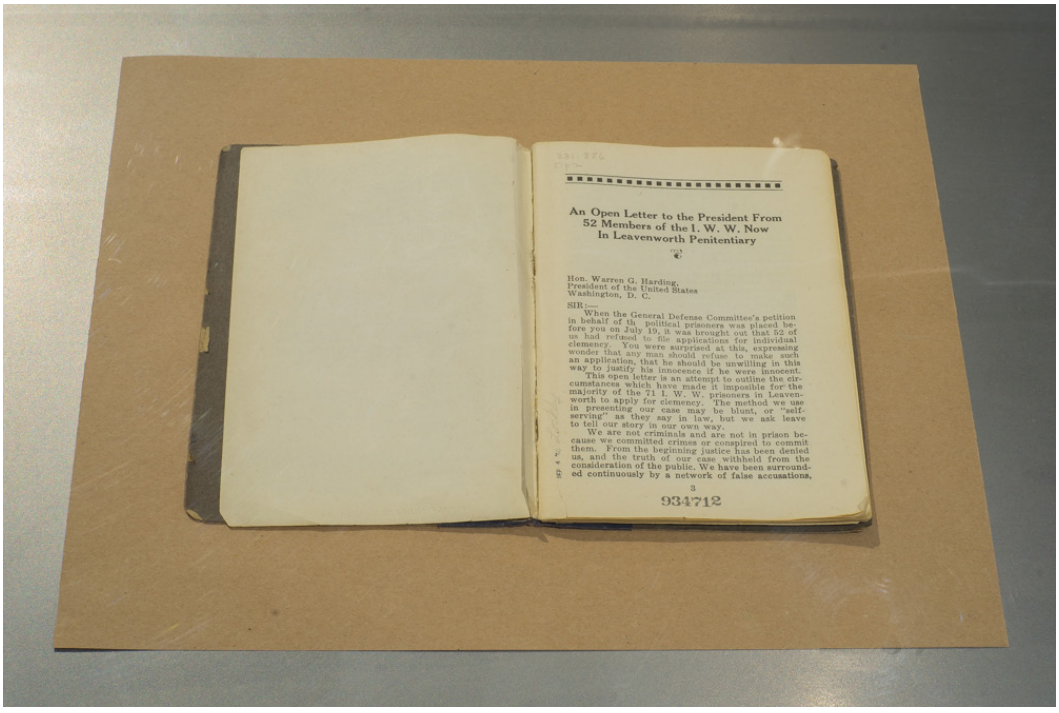

Jacob O. Bentall (Minneapolis, Minnesota) / #17289
Jacob Bentall was convicted for making a speech during his campaign as the Socialist Party's candidate for governor of Minnesota.
He was charged with conspiracy and violating the Espionage Act and received a sentence of five years which he served at Leavenworth Penitentiary. He was released in 1923.

17.


Vicente Aurelio Azuara (Monterey, Spain) / #13102
Editor of the IWW Newspaper *El Ribeldo,* Vicente Azuara was sentenced to twenty years for publishing anti-war material.
He served at Leavenworth Penitentiary from 1917 to 1922. His sentence was commuted after he agreed to be deported to Spain and never return to the United States.

18.

19.



An Open Letter to the President From
52 Members of the I. W. W. Now
In Leavenworth Penitentiary

Hon. Warren G. Harding,
President of the United States
Washington, D. C.

SIR:—

When the General Defense Committee's petition in behalf of th political prisoners was placed before you on July 19, it was brought out that 52 of us had refused to file applications for individual clemency. You were surprised at this, expressing wonder that any man should refuse to make such an application, that he should be unwilling in this way to justify his innocence if he were innocent.

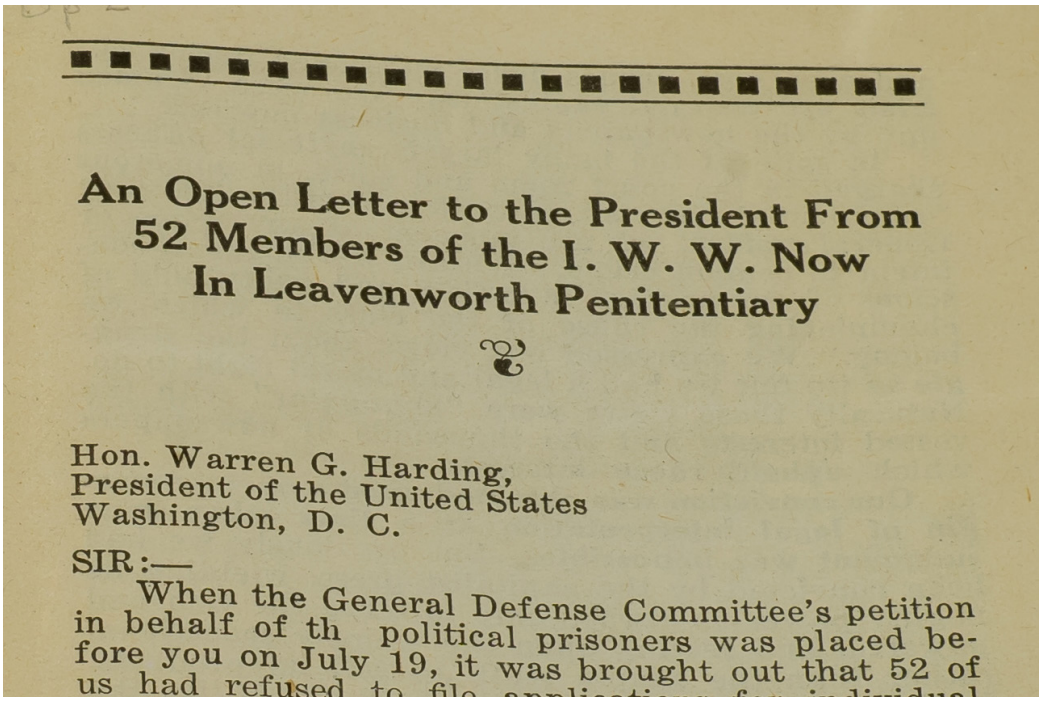
This open letter is an attempt to outline the circumstances which have made it impossible for the majority of the 71 I. W. W. prisoners in Leavenworth to apply for clemency. The method we use in presenting our case may be blunt, or "self-serving" as they say in law, but we ask leave to tell our story in our own way.

We are not criminals and are not in prison because we committed crimes or conspired to commit them. From the beginning justice has been denied us, and the truth of our case withheld from the consideration of the public. We have been surrounded continuously by a network of false accusations,

3

934712

20.



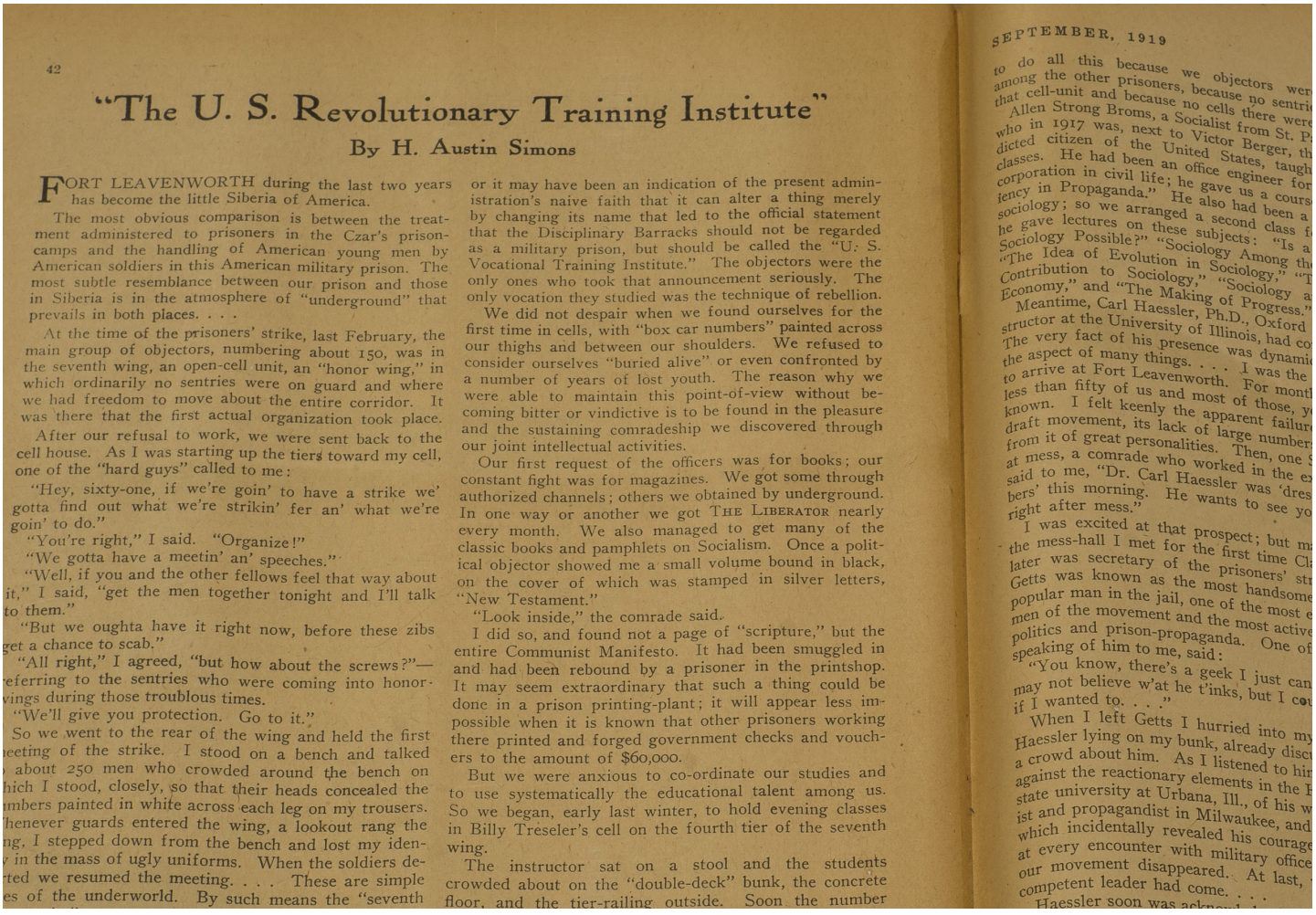
An Open Letter to the President From 52 Members of the I. W. W. Now In Leavenworth Penitentiary

Hon. Warren G. Harding,
President of the United States
Washington, D. C.

SIR:—

When the General Defense Committee's petition in behalf of th political prisoners was placed before you on July 19, it was brought out that 52 of us had refused to file

21.



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"The U. S. Revolutionary Training Institute"

By H. Austin Simons

FORT LEAVENWORTH during the last two years has become the little Siberia of America.

The most obvious comparison is between the treatment administered to prisoners in the Czar's prison-camps and the handling of American young men by American soldiers in this American military prison. The most subtle resemblance between our prison and those in Siberia is in the atmosphere of "underground" that prevails in both places. . . .

At the time of the prisoners' strike, last February, the main group of objectors, numbering about 150, was in the seventh wing, an open-cell unit, an "honor wing," in which ordinarily no sentries were on guard and where we had freedom to move about the entire corridor. It was there that the first actual organization took place.

After our refusal to work, we were sent back to the cell house. As I was starting up the tiers toward my cell, one of the "hard guys" called to me:

"Hey, sixty-one, if we're goin' to have a strike we' gotta find out what we're strikin' fer an' what we're goin' to do."

"You're right," I said. "Organize!"

"We gotta have a meetin' an' speeches."

"Well, if you and the other fellows feel that way about it," I said, "get the men together tonight and I'll talk to them."

"But we oughta have it right now, before these zibs get a chance to scab."

"All right," I agreed, "but how about the screws?"—referring to the sentries who were coming into honor-wings during those troublous times.

"We'll give you protection. Go to it."

So we went to the rear of the wing and held the first meeting of the strike. I stood on a bench and talked to about 250 men who crowded around the bench on which I stood, closely, so that their heads concealed the numbers painted in white across each leg on my trousers. Whenever guards entered the wing, a lookout rang the gong, I stepped down from the bench and lost my identity in the mass of ugly uniforms. When the soldiers departed we resumed the meeting. . . . These are simple types of the underworld. By such means the "seventh

or it may have been an indication of the present administration's naive faith that it can alter a thing merely by changing its name that led to the official statement that the Disciplinary Barracks should not be regarded as a military prison, but should be called the "U. S. Vocational Training Institute." The objectors were the only ones who took that announcement seriously. The only vocation they studied was the technique of rebellion.

We did not despair when we found ourselves for the first time in cells, with "box car numbers" painted across our thighs and between our shoulders. We refused to consider ourselves "buried alive" or even confronted by a number of years of lost youth. The reason why we were able to maintain this point-of-view without becoming bitter or vindictive is to be found in the pleasure and the sustaining comradeship we discovered through our joint intellectual activities.

Our first request of the officers was for books; our constant fight was for magazines. We got some through authorized channels; others we obtained by underground. In one way or another we got THE LIBERATOR nearly every month. We also managed to get many of the classic books and pamphlets on Socialism. Once a political objector showed me a small volume bound in black, on the cover of which was stamped in silver letters, "New Testament."

"Look inside," the comrade said.

I did so, and found not a page of "scripture," but the entire Communist Manifesto. It had been smuggled in and had been rebound by a prisoner in the printshop. It may seem extraordinary that such a thing could be done in a prison printing-plant; it will appear less impossible when it is known that other prisoners working there printed and forged government checks and vouchers to the amount of $60,000.

But we were anxious to co-ordinate our studies and to use systematically the educational talent among us. So we began, early last winter, to hold evening classes in Billy Treseler's cell on the fourth tier of the seventh wing.

The instructor sat on a stool and the students crowded about on the "double-deck" bunk, the concrete floor, and the tier-railing outside. Soon the number

to do all this because we objectors were among the other prisoners, because no sentries that cell-unit and because no cells there were

Allen Strong Broms, a Socialist from St. P who in 1917 was, next to Victor Berger, th dicted citizen of the United States, taugh classes. He had been an office engineer for corporation in civil life; he gave us a cours iency in Propaganda." He also had been a sociology; so we arranged a second class f he gave lectures on these subjects: "Is a Sociology Possible?" "Sociology Among th "The Idea of Evolution in Sociology," "T Contribution to Sociology," "Sociology a Economy," and "The Making of Progress."

Meantime, Carl Haessler, Ph.D., Oxford structor at the University of Illinois, had co The very fact of his presence was dynamic the aspect of many things. . . . I was the to arrive at Fort Leavenworth. For month less than fifty of us and most of those, y known. I felt keenly the apparent failur draft movement, its lack of large numbers from it of great personalities. Then, one s at mess, a comrade who worked in the ex said to me, "Dr. Carl Haessler was 'dres bers' this morning. He wants to see yo right after mess."

I was excited at that prospect; but m the mess-hall I met for the first time Cla later was secretary of the prisoners' str Getts was known as the most handsome popular man in the jail, one of the most e men of the movement and the most active politics and prison-propaganda. One of speaking of him to me, said:

"You know, there's a geek I just can may not believe w'at he t'inks, but I co if I wanted to. . . ."

When I left Getts I hurried into my Haessler lying on my bunk, already disc a crowd about him. As I listened to hi against the reactionary elements in the I state university at Urbana, Ill., of his w ist and propagandist in Milwaukee, and which incidentally revealed his courage at every encounter with military office our movement disappeared. At last, competent leader had come. . . .

Haessler soon was ackno

22.


FRAGILE ART
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each has a special place in our nation's history. Our
stories in an effort to better understand the Americ
Memorial Trays are reclaimed cafeteria tra
incarceration of anti-war activists, newspaper edito
and 1918, tens of thousands of Americans were cha
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at USP Leavenworth and the United States Disciplin
memory of one of these individuals at the location
Memorial Trays should be displayed where
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D.M. Clifford
The Leavenworth Project
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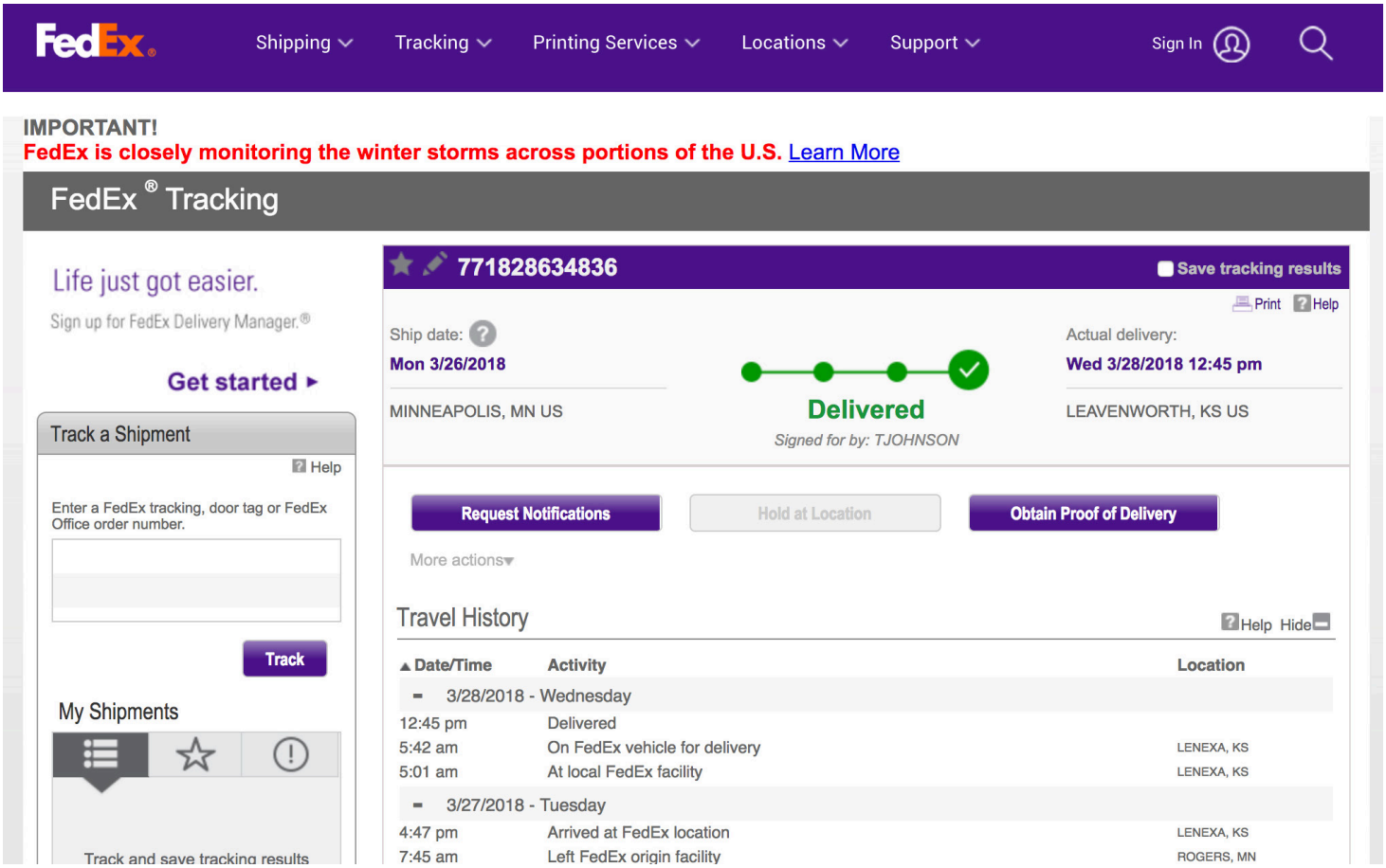
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Obtain Proof of Delivery
More actions
Travel History
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Location
3/28/2018 - Wednesday
12:45 pm Delivered
5:42 am On FedEx vehicle for delivery LENEXA, KS
5:01 am At local FedEx facility LENEXA, KS
3/27/2018 - Tuesday
4:47 pm Arrived at FedEx location LENEXA, KS
7:45 am Left FedEx origin facility ROGERS, MN

25.

EDUCATION

2018 MFA Candidate, expected graduation date: August 2018
University of Minnesota

2014 BA, Art History
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
BFA, Sculpture
University of New Mexico

SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2016 *Extreme Eigentum* (with Robert Schmidt)
Q.Arma Building, Minneapolis, MN
Bless this Mess (with Mandy Martinson)
Charles D. Redepenning Gallery, Hopkins Center for Art, Hopkins, MN
2014 *McCarthyism*
Freestyle Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 *Section of Disapproved Books* (panel discussion: *Disapproved Knowledge*)
Minneapolis Central Library (Presented by Weisman Art Museum in collaboration with Northern Spark)
UHN-URTH
Katherine E. Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota
2017 *Und#9*
Dragonerkaserne, Karlsruhe, DE
Sommer Austellung
Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe, DE
A Mussel is to a House (in collaboration with Walker Art Center and University of Minnesota)
Yeah Maybe, Minneapolis, MN
Untitled 13 (juried)
Soo Visual Arts Center Minneapolis, MN. Jurors: Dean Otto and Astria Suparak
2016 *Open Door Twelve* (juried)
Rosalux Gallery, Minneapolis, MN. Juror: Andrea Carlson
SWAP MEET - The Shipping Show
Mucharaum, Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe, DE
Borderlines
Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN. Curator: Ethan Aaro Jones
2014 *Heart of the City*
516 Arts, Albuquerque, NM
2013 *New Year New Talent*
Freestyle Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

AWARDS / RESIDENCIES

2018 Allen Downs Photography and Moving Image Fellowship
Gerald Gustafson Memorial Fellowship in Photography
2017 Graduate Travel / Professional Development Grant, University of Minnesota
Summer Residency, Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe, DE
2016 Graduate Research Partnership Program Award, University of Minnesota
Graduate Travel / Professional Development Grant, University of Minnesota
2015 Graduate Travel / Professional Development Grant, University of Minnesota
2014 Ada Wester Fine Arts Endowment
Nat Moore Memorial Fine Arts Scholarship

Statement

My art focuses on American institutions. I make works which explore the dynamics, materials, and histories of institutions and disciplinary structures: prisons and schools become entry points to broader conversations about power, censorship, race, class, and sexuality.

Research into the justice system, specifically the federal prison system and the prison-industrial complex, serves as a foundation for works that question the national narrative and the functions of America's institutions. Using archival material, sculpture, photography, video, and installation, I reconfigure institutional signifiers and artifacts to suggest new ways of understanding social control.

I disrupt and co-opt actual institutional channels, procedures, and spaces, engaging directly with federal agencies and institutions; the US Department of Justice and the US Bureau of Prisons in particular. The trail of official paperwork and correspondence resulting from these bureaucratic interventions becomes integral to the work as a documentation of its existing in and impacting non-art systems.